

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2011

Teaching International Students: Assessing Student Learning

From our *Teaching International Students* video module series, Linh Littleford (Psychological Science) discusses how to fairly assess student learning of international and domestic students.

Instructional Technology: Is the iPad for You?

Linda Putman (Learning Technologies Consulting & Support) provides a resource guide to assist in using the iPad in your teaching.

The Bookshelf

The Art of the Changing Brain: Enriching the Practice of Teaching by Exploring the Biology of Learning

ITAS Colloquia Series

ITAS is sponsoring a colloquia series highlighting the 2010 award winners for Excellence in Teaching and the Creative Teaching Grant. Convening on the final Wednesday of each month throughout the spring term, an award recipient will discuss his/her dream course or grant project.

Event Spotlight

Creating and Sustaining an Effective Learning Environment – Each year brings new students with different perception and expectations about “what counts” when it comes to success in the classroom.

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Workshops, seminars, and trainings throughout the month of January

Innovation in Teaching, Assessment, & Scholarship

www.bsu.edu/itas

Teaching International Students: Assessing Student Learning

Linh Littleford

Department of Psychological Science

A common issue Ball State instructors face is how to fairly assess student learning. This can be particularly challenging when instructors teach students who have difficulty speaking, reading, or writing English at the college level.



Determining Assessment Criteria

We recommend that you reflect on your assessment practices and be intentional when determining your assessment criteria. In order to identify the essential elements of your goals and objectives, we recommend that you ask yourself the following questions:

- What are the goals for the assignment?
- Is correct use of standard English vital to the learning goals, for this particular assignment?

Instructors must maintain their high standards for all their students and provide students with the tools necessary to achieve those goals. However, to be fair, instructors should make their assessment criteria equally challenging for domestic and international students. In other words, barriers that inadvertently place some international and domestic students at a disadvantage, such as correct use of English grammar and spelling when it is not a required learning goal, would be unfair.

Therefore, we recommend that you reflect on the following questions to determine whether your assessment criteria match with your objectives and goals:

- How do you assess learning?
- What criteria do you use?

- Are the criteria equally challenging for both domestic and international students? In other words, how much does mastery of your course content depend on prior knowledge or knowledge of American culture and exposure to the American educational system?
- Do you have a range of assessment tasks?
- Do you allow students to demonstrate in several ways that they have met the criteria? For example, do all assignments need to be written in paragraph form or can graphic, theatrical, or artistic presentations be substituted for written explanations?

Providing Effective Feedback

To examine how you provide feedback, we recommend that you consider *when and how frequently you provide feedback*.

We encourage you to require brief assignments that are representative of your learning goals and standards at the beginning of the semester. For example, if your writing assignments will be graded heavily on correct English grammar—and that is part of your stated criteria—let all students know that from the start. By providing feedback early, you will help students make informed decisions about whether or not they should remain in your classes. The sooner they can make these decisions, the less likely their visa and financial aid status will be negatively affected.

Another question to consider is *what type of feedback do you provide?*

For example, do you provide students with suggestions for how to improve before they submit their final version of the assignment or do you give feedback and grades only after the students have completed the assignment?

We encourage you to inform students what assistance you are and are not willing to provide. For example, stating that you will review students outlines for content and will view working drafts but will not grade their drafts nor correct spelling and grammatical errors would help students know what to expect.

A final question to consider is *do you provide concrete feedback and show examples of what students SHOULD do, when possible?*

In other words, stating that a sentence is awkward is not as helpful as stating that students need to use a different term, or that they need to use the present tense rather than the past tense.

Discussing Assignments with Students

When discussing the assignments with students, we suggest that you make explicit, orally and in writing what part of the assignment is due, when it is due, what format is acceptable (such as e-mail attachments, video clips, paintings, or paper printouts), and how long the assignment needs to be. Also, be sure to describe in detail your assessment criteria, including

- What is required?
- What is recommended?
- What are your expectations regarding English language proficiency?

If possible, we suggest that you show outcome samples and provide students with guidance on how they can achieve the assignments' goals and objectives.

Academic Dishonesty

Some international students and a number of domestic students might not be aware that you consider it dishonest if they used someone else's better phrasing of words or made minor wording changes, without using quotes and appropriate citations. In addition, some students have been educated in environments where peer tutoring and copying each other's answers are forms of cooperative learning. If these behaviors are not acceptable to you, we encourage you to explicitly convey these standards. We also encourage you to discuss, if appropriate, your grading criteria for group work and outline your expectations regarding collaboration.

Finally, if you have noticed behaviors that suggest academic dishonesty, we encourage you to suspend judgment of dishonest intentions until you have asked students about how they completed the assignments and assessed their level of understanding of your definition of academic dishonesty.

We hope that the information we just provided will help you be more reflective and intentional as you make your make your assessment practices fair and inclusive for both international and

domestic students. We encourage you to adapt the recommendations to meet your needs, your goals for the specific courses you teach, and the subject matter in your discipline.

*This is from a series of video modules, **Teaching International Students**, created by ITAS. Go to our [Teaching International Students webpage](#) to view the module series.*

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Is the iPad for You?

Linda Putman

Learning Technologies Consulting & Support

You've seen it on TV and now you are probably wondering how this new technology can fit into your educational toolbox! We have created the **iPad Learning Resource_Guide** to answer some of your questions concerning the technology, accessibility, educator reviews and ideas for implementing the iPad and its engaging apps into the curriculum.



So, what does the future hold for the iPad? Here is a prediction from an article published recently on the [Campus Technology Website](#): "Ball State University's Michael Hanley, a professor of journalism, predicted that the iPad will become a strong education device because of its interactivity and its ability to use converged media." (Schaffhauser, 2010)¹

Read the complete article [here](#).

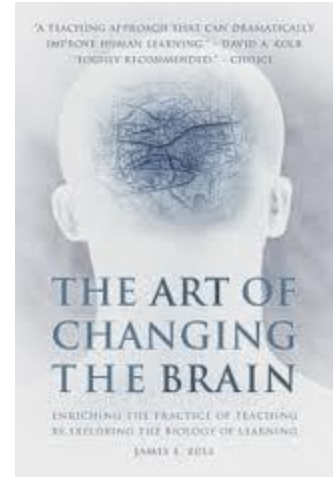
¹Schaffhauser, D. (2010). Apple's iPad: The future of mobile computing in education? Access at <http://campustechnology.com/Articles/2010/01/27/Apples-iPad-The-Future-of-Mobile-Computing-in-Education.aspx?p=1>.

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THE BOOKSHELF

THE ART OF THE CHANGING BRAIN: ENRICHING THE PRACTICE OF TEACHING BY EXPLORING THE BIOLOGY OF LEARNING

Zull, James E. *The Art of the Changing Brain: Enriching the Practice of Teaching by Exploring the Biology of Learning*. Sterling, VA: Stylus, 2002.



“The brain cycle, then provokes us to think about the sensory input that students get in our classes. But it doesn’t end there. It also suggests that we should look at its implications for other parts of learning.” p. 20

Neuroscience tells us that the products of the mind—thought, emotions, artistic creation—are the result of the interactions of the biological brain with our senses and the physical world: in short, that thinking and learning are the products of a biological process.

This realization, that learning actually alters the brain by changing the number and strength of synapses, offers a powerful foundation for rethinking teaching practice and one’s philosophy of teaching.

James Zull invites teachers in higher education or any other setting to accompany him in his exploration of what scientists can tell us about the brain and to discover how this knowledge can influence the practice of teaching. He describes the brain in clear non-technical language and an engaging conversational tone, highlighting its functions and parts and how they interact, and always relating them to the real world of the classroom and his own evolution as a teacher.

The Art of Changing the Brain is grounded in the practicalities and challenges of creating effective opportunities for deep and lasting learning and of dealing with students as unique learners.

from Stylus Publishing

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ITAS Colloquia Series

Innovation in Teaching, Assessment, & Scholarship is sponsoring a spring colloquia series highlighting the 2010 award winners for Excellence and Teaching and the Creative Teaching Grant. On the last Wednesday of each month, an award recipient will discuss his/her dream course or grant project. Registration is not required.

Science on Stage: The Limits of the Human

Jennifer Blackmer (Theater & Dance)

Excellence in Teaching Award

Wednesday January 26, 2011

3:00-4:00 pm

TC 412

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EVENT SPOTLIGHT

Creating and Sustaining an Effective Learning Environment

Thursday, January 27th, 3:30-5:00 pm, TC 411

Facilitator: Michael Gillilan (Student Rights & Community Standards)

Each year brings new students with different perceptions and expectations about “what counts” when it comes to success in the classroom. This session brings together educators from various disciplines to discuss creating and sustaining an effective learning environment in partnership with students and responding effectively when things don’t go as planned.

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SERVICES SPOTLIGHT

STATISTICAL ASSISTANCE

Our staff can provide assistance with the data analysis and statistical software such as PASW (SPSS), AMOS, and SAS. For those applying for funding, we can also assist with the power analysis that may be required.

Depending on your needs, we can run the analyses for you or provide technical assistance and advice for running them on your own.

To arrange for statistical assistance, contact James A. Jones at 765-285-1506.

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UPCOMING EVENTS - January 2011

Monday, January 3

Blackboard: Designing an Effective Course Site	1:00-2:00pm	TC412
Blackboard: Content Management	4:30-6:00pm	TC 412

Tuesday, January 4

Blackboard: Designing an Effective Course Site	3:00-4:00pm	TC412
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Wednesday, January 5

Blackboard: Content Management	10:00-10:30am	TC 412
Blackboard: Designing an Effective Course Site	5:00-6:00pm	TC412

Thursday, January 6

Blackboard: Content Management	11:00am-12:30pm	TC 412
inQsit – Creating Online Tests	1:30-3pm	TC 412

Extreme PowerPoint Make-Over: Engaging Students with Your Presentation

2-3:30pm TC 405

Web Gradebook 4-5:30pm TC 412

Friday, January 7

Blackboard: Designing an Effective Course Site 10-11 am TC412

Blackboard: Content Management 11:30 am-1 pm TC 412

Blackboard: Grade Center 2-3:30 pm TC 412

Tuesday, January 10

inQsit – Creating Online Surveys 1:30-2:30 pm TC405

Tuesday, January 18

Online Course Evaluation 11 am-12 pm TC 412

Wednesday, January 19

Clicker Workshop – Downloading & Synching Your Roster

Blackboard 1-2 pm TC 412

Web Gradebook 2-3 pm TC 412

Thursday, January 20

Online Course Evaluation 8-9 am TC 412

Clicker Workshop – Downloading & Synching Your Roster (repeat of Wednesday session)

Web Gradebook 11 am-12 pm TC 411

Blackboard 12-1 pm TC 411

Friday, January 21

Online Course Evaluation 2-3 pm TC 412

Monday, January 24

Online Course Evaluation 1-2 pm TC 412

Wednesday, January 26

Online Course Evaluation

9-10 am

TC 412

Thursday, January 27

Creating and Sustaining an Effective Learning Environment

3:30-5 pm

TC 411

Friday, January 28

Visualizing Results with Tables in Microsoft Word

1-2:30 pm

TC 405

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Innovation in Teaching, Assessment, & Scholarship

Teachers College (TC), Room 402

Ball State University

Muncie IN 47306

Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Phone: 765-285-1763

Fax: 765-285-2669

E-mail: itas@bsu.edu

www.bsu.edu/itas